

Several months ago, ABC's "Nightline" program featured a tribute to the fallen American soldiers in Iraq. This moving tribute was deemed "too political" by the corporate ownership at Sinclair Broadcasting, who deemed it unfit for the air. Now, at the height of the election build-up, they find a smear campaign against presidential hopeful John Kerry, disguised as a documentary, to be so "newsworthy" that they are demanding that their stations air it.

This is the height, or rather the DEPTH, of hypocrisy.

I, along with millions of other Americans, demand that the Kerry campaign, at the very least, be offered a equal timeslot to use in whatever means they desire. If this nod to fairness is unacceptable, then Sinclair should not be allowed to run the attack.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.